ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

Newsletter of the N.H. Department of Environmental Services May/June 2005

Governor's Message

State joins Energy Star 10 percent challenge

State government is the largest energy user in New Hampshire. With 1,200 state buildings, we spend more than $18 million per year on heating, cooling and electricity costs.

By improving state government's energy efficiency, we will reduce air pollution, save taxpayers' money, and improve public health and the environment. That is why I am proud that New Hampshire recently joined EPA's ENERGY STAR challenge to improve the energy efficiency of state buildings by 10 percent or more.

Governor Lynch

New Hampshire has made great progress since it launched its Building Energy Conservation Initiative (BECI) in 1997. This program analyzes state buildings for energy and resource conservation opportunities. It uses a "paid from savings" procedure that allows agencies to use energy savings from energy retrofits and building upgrades to pay back the capital costs of those improvements, commonly known as performance contracting. BECI has resulted in energy improvements in 74 state buildings and more than $1.2 million in projected annual energy savings.

I'm committed to building on that foundation to make New Hampshire state government a leader in energy efficiency. In my budget, I have proposed hiring a state energy manager to identify ways state government can reduce its energy use, to track energy use by department, and continue energy upgrades in state buildings.

The ENERGY STAR Challenge will help keep us focused on our goal.

The ENERGY STAR Challenge calls for three important actions: assessing how much energy each building is using, establishing efficiency improvement goals of 10 percent or

Governor's Message, *continued on page 2*

Fish advisory warns of mercury effects

by Pamela Schnepper, DES Toxicologist

Go fish!

Fishing is a healthful hobby and eating fish is a healthy dietary choice. With the fishing season upon us, however, we all need to remember that freshwater fish caught in northeastern U.S. may contain mercury.

Mercury is an element found in the earth's crust. In the environment mercury can exist in a number of inorganic

Fish Advisory, *continued on page 3*

Commissioner's Column

VLAP celebrates 20 years of monitoring state's lakes & ponds

With the arrival of spring and summer, we all look forward to returning to our lakes for recreation, fun, sun and relaxation. This summer, one of our state's key lake protection and watershed management programs marks its twentieth anniversary. The New Hampshire Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) was initiated in 1985 in response to an expressed desire of lake residents to be involved in protecting our lakes and waterbodies. With

VLAP, *continued on page 2*

3rd Annual Bike/Walk to Work Day May 20

Leave your car at home and bike or walk to work on Friday, May 20. This event is part of a state and national effort to get people out of their cars and experience the benefits of exercise, less air pollution and less traffic congestion.

Several commuter "check-in" stations with refreshments are planned for the Concord area, including the State House Plaza, Concord Hospital, Forest Society, Department of Transportation, and a joint DES/Department of Health and Human Services at 29 Hazen Drive. Participants who bike or walk to work will be eligible to win raffle prizes, including gift certificates at local businesses. Participants will also be challenged to maintain their biking or walking habits throughout the summer months, and if they do so, they will qualify for additional prizes.

In New Hampshire, the event is organized by numerous state, private, and community organizations, including seacoast regional planning organizations, DOT's Bike/Pedestrian program, Concord 20/20 and other participating organizations across the state. This year, Claremont, Dover, Durham, Exeter, Hanover, Keene, Laconia, Littleton, Manchester, Nashua, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Stratham and Swanzey are also promoting the event. For more information, visit www.nhbikeped.com or call Tom Jameson, NH Bike/Pedestrian Coordinator, at (603) 271-1668. ■

VLAP

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over 900 lakes and ponds and only 10 DES biologists, the strength and success of this program is dependent upon its approximately 500 trained volunteers.

The routine volunteer monitoring results in early detection of water quality changes, allowing DES to trace potential problems to their source before the quality of the lake or pond is severely impacted. Over time, baseline data are used to determine long-term trends in lake water quality. These data are invaluable in serving as a community planning resource, in maintaining federal lakes funding, and in DES's mission to protect New Hampshire's lakes and ponds. If a negative water quality trend in a lake or pond is revealed through VLAP monitoring, the waterbody and its watershed may be eligible for more intensive study through the New Hampshire Clean Lakes Program.

DES biologists continue to be inspired by the dedication of the volunteer monitors. To recognize the efforts of everyone involved in this program and to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of VLAP, VLAP signs will be posted by each VLAP group at a public access point near their lake or pond. The sign will not only inform the public that the waterbody is monitored through VLAP, but also provide the public with the address of the VLAP website should they wish to learn more about the waterbody, as well as responsible stewardship of New Hampshire's surface waters. By raising the public's awareness of the VLAP program, we hope to influence the public's respect for the waterbody and their behavior while recreating on the lake or pond.

Regardless of motivation for participating in VLAP, the end result is the same: VLAP volunteer monitors have played and will continue to play an integral role in protecting the quality of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds! Congratulations on your first twenty years, and here's to many more. ■

Governor's Message

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more, and making efficiency improvements where cost effective.

One sign that the state is heading in the right direction was the recent announcement that the Department of Justice building was awarded an ENERGY STAR label by the EPA. The Energy Star label is awarded to buildings that demonstrate superior energy performance. ENERGY STAR's national performance rating system ranks building energy performance on a one to 100 scale based on energy usage per square foot, normalized for weather, climate, occupancy and other factors. Buildings scoring 75 or higher that meet standards for indoor air quality, lighting, ventilation and thermal comfort are eligible for the label.

State government can and should be a leader in reducing energy costs and protecting our environment. Our taking up the ENERGY STAR Challenge is just one more example of that commitment.

John Lynch, *Governor*

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

NHDES

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Fish Advisory

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and organic forms. The most common form of organic mercury is methylmercury. Methylmercury is more readily absorbed into the body and is more toxic than inorganic mercury. More than 90 percent of the mercury in adult fish is methylmercury.

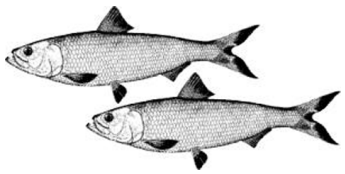
The major source of mercury in our environment is from fossil fuel combustion and solid waste incineration. Through efforts to reduce mercury in the solid waste stream and regulations to control air emissions, the rate of mercury deposition to the environment has been reduced in recent years.

The levels of mercury in most freshwater fish caught in New Hampshire are low. However, to help ensure good health, DES has developed guidelines for how often freshwater fish can be safely eaten. The fish advisory recommends the number of fish meals that can be eaten without a substantially increased risk of adverse health effects from mercury. The most pronounced adverse effect of low-level mercury exposure is on the central nervous system. The developing nervous system of the fetus and or young child is more sensitive than the adult nervous system. This is why the advisory is specific to the age of the fish consumer.

Allowable Meals per Month

Women of childbearing age, pregnant, or breastfeeding	One 8-oz. meal/mo.
Children under age 7	One 3-oz. meal/mo.
All others	Four 8- oz. meals/mo.

There is also a general advisory for bass and pickerel. Mercury accumulates in the bodies of animals that eat it, so it is subject to biomagnification in the food chain. The amount of mercury in fish varies with the size and age of the fish, what they eat and where they live. Larger, older fish that eat smaller fish tend to have the highest levels. Bass and pickerel can grow very large and are high in the aquatic food chain. For these species, only fish less than 12 inches in length should be eaten.



Certain waterbodies have advisories in addition to the statewide advisories. Additional guidelines apply to freshwater fish taken from: May Pond and Ashuelot Pond in Washington; Crystal Lake in Gilmanton; Comerford, Moore and McIndoes reservoirs on the Connecticut River; and the Androscoggin River from Berlin to the Maine border. Fishermen are encouraged to check the waterbody-specific advice if they plan on consuming fish from these waters (see the web address below).

DES conducts a fish sampling program and will continue to monitor and update the fish advisories for New Hampshire.

Ocean fish and shellfish can also contain mercury and other toxins. The guidelines for seafood consumption differ from those for freshwater fish. All of this information is available in the pamphlet: *Is It Safe to Eat the Fish We Catch? Mercury & Other Pollutants in Fish* and the insert: *Fish Consumption Advisory for Freshwater Fish, Ocean Fish and Shellfish*, which are available on-line at www.des.state.nh.us/pdf/Mercury_Fish.pdf.

For more information about the DES Freshwater Fish Consumption Advisory Program, please contact Pamela Schnepper at (603) 271-3994 or pschnepper@des.state.nh.us. ■

Limiting mercury emissions with new legislation

by Dr. Jeffrey Underhill, DES Air Resources Division

If you fish in New Hampshire, you may find it hard to believe that fish caught in remote and seemingly pristine lakes, rivers and ponds can be contaminated with a highly toxic metal, mercury. Mercury comes from manmade and natural air pollution sources all around the world and here within our state.

With great success, DES has regulated incinerators and open burning in order to reduce our state's mercury emissions and early signs are that mercury contamination in some areas of our state is lessening. DES has been working with the state Legislature to pass Senate Bill 128 that will also address coal burning power plants, the single largest remaining source of mercury emissions in the state. This bill will reduce mercury emissions from the state's coal burning power plants by about 60 percent by 2009 and by nearly 90 percent by 2013. Because of the physical limitations at the largest coal-burning power plant in the state, PSNH's Merrimack station, optimizing the operation of the pollution controls may prove to be challenging. To help PSNH if it falls slightly short of its goals, alternate compliance credits can be achieved by investing in other types of mercury cleanup in the state. This might consist of collecting unneeded mercury stock in laboratory supply rooms, cleaning out drains that may have mercury in their traps, or by actively seeking collection of mercury containing devices that would otherwise find their way into local landfills. If passed, this bill should help us take the next big step toward a healthier New Hampshire. ■

DES awarded for efforts to reduce mercury in hospitals

In April, Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) presented to Sara Johnson, Manager of the New Hampshire Pollution Prevention Program (NHPPP), a Champion for Change award. The award, which was presented at the National Environment Partnership Summit in Chicago, recognizes the NHPPP's efforts to promote mercury elimination and waste reduction and the coordination of the New Hampshire Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (NH3E). Sara has been working with healthcare facilities since 1998 promoting pollution prevention and most recently pharmaceutical management. With the help of Robert Bishop, also of DES, and Debbie Augustine, of the Foundation for Healthy Communities, New Hampshire is leading the way on environmental issues facing the healthcare industry today. ■

NHPPP Manager Sara Johnson (holding award) is congratulated by (from left to right) Susan Hazen, EPA; Laura Brannen, Hospitals for a Healthy Environment; Lindsay Robinson, American Hospital Association; Robert Varney, EPA Region I administrator; Kathleen Perry, American Nurses Association; and Anna Gilmore Hall, Health Care Without Harm.

Did you know ...?

...that a typical incandescent EXIT light fixture takes two 20T6-1/2 lamps, which equals 40 watts total? And if you consider how many EXIT lights are in public-access buildings and that they're on 24/7 – there's a lot of wattage being consumed! However, a LED replacement fixture consumes only 2.4 watts total. So, you can run approximately *16* of the LEDs for the same energy consumed by *one* of the old units. That's quite a savings!

Future Environmental Leaders Compete in
14th Annual NH Envirothon
Managing Cultural Landscapes
May 17, 2005
Canterbury Shaker Village, Canterbury
Sponsored by NH Association of Conservation Districts

The NH Envirothon enhances the curricula and overall environmental education of high school students through competition designed to build knowledge in water resources, forests, soils, wildlife, and current issues. Each year, staff from DES and other organizations contribute their expertise to the NH Envirothon to help train these young environmentalists on how to analyze critical issues. The volunteers then evaluate the students' performance and ingenuity in solving problems based on the year's theme. The winning team will represent New Hampshire at the Canon North American Envirothon. For complete information, go to www.envirothon.org/.

Asbestos training seminars conducted around the state

A series of free asbestos awareness training seminars will be held around the state at various locations between now and June 2006. The seminars are targeted for municipal officials, building inspectors, public works engineers, demolition and building renovation contractors, and those who work in specialty trades, such as plumbing, heating and ventilation, or electrical contractors. Participants will learn how to properly manage asbestos during building renovation and demolition projects, and the hazards and penalties associated with improper management.

The seminars are being conducted by Aries Engineering, in consultation with URS Corporation and DES. The seminars will include a "lessons learned" case study from an enforcement action taken in northern New Hampshire that addresses the importance of following appropriate protocols and local, state and federal regulations whenever asbestos is present during renovation and construction projects.

The first offering will be a four-hour training session on May 11, from 8 a.m. to noon at the Mountain View Grand Resort in Whitefield. Training manuals and certificates will be issued to all participants and continuing education credits will be available for engineers and geologists who attend.

In addition to the four- and eight-hour sessions, a special one-hour presentation that highlights the case study is available for trade associations and organizations. To arrange for a one-hour presentation for your group, to register for the May 11 four-hour session, or for additional information on the times and locations of upcoming training sessions, contact Anne Piekarski at Aries Engineering, (603) 228-0008 or visit Aries website at www.aries-eng.com. ■

Emergence of perchlorate as potential chemical of concern

by Brandon Kernen, Manager, Source Water Protection Section

Perchlorate (ClO4-) has emerged as a chemical of concern in the United States over the last ten years. A compound of chlorine and oxygen, perchlorate has been widely used in solid fuels for rockets and missiles, as well as in explosives, fireworks, road flares, air-bag inflation systems, lubricating oils, nuclear reactors, and electronic tubes. Perchlorate is also used in tanning and leather finishing, electroplating, aluminum refining, rubber manufacture, and in paint and enamel production. It also occurs naturally in certain types of fertilizers imported from Chile.

For decades, perchlorate was not considered to be a significant risk to human health or the environment, and the detection limit for laboratory testing was not lower than 400 parts per billion (ppb). However, recent research has found that perchlorate can disrupt the body's synthesis of thyroid hormones, which are essential for metabolism and normal growth and development. The impacts are greatest to pregnant women, developing fetuses, infants, children, and individuals who have low levels of thyroid hormones. Some states have already adopted drinking water standards or advisory levels from 1 ppb to 18 ppb. The USEPA has placed perchlorate on the contaminant candidate list and it is expected to develop a perchlorate standard within the next few years. DES's Risk Assessment Group is also studying the chemical to see if a standard is warranted.

Most public water systems in New Hampshire have never sampled for perchlorate. Exceptions are systems that sampled in accordance with the federal Unregulated Contaminants Monitoring Rule (UCMR), which applies to a few small systems and all large systems serving more than 10,000 people. However, the systems that completed UCMR sampling were only required to use an analytical technique with a 4 ppb detection limit. In New Hampshire, this sampling (at the entry point to the distribution system) did not detect perchlorate in any water system; however, 2 percent of the water systems tested nationwide in accordance with the UCMR did detect perchlorate.

In 2004, a statewide study involving non-transient and community water supplies in Massachusetts, with a detection limit of 1.0 ppb, detected perchlorate in eight out of 692 systems. The study also noted that none of the presumed sources of perchlorate implicated military or aerospace activities.

During 2005, DES plans to assess the potential occurrence of perchlorate in New Hampshire drinking water supplies. Samples will initially be taken at water supplies near areas where rock blasting has occurred or fireworks have been discharged, and near facilities known to use perchlorate in their operations.

The study will employ a method with a detection limit of 0.35 ppb. As of February, DES had collected water samples from six public water supply sources and found perchlorate at concentrations of 0.35 ppb to 0.7 ppb in two of the sources. DES will use the results of the study, along with the results of a study currently being completed in Massachusetts, to identify and promote source water protection measures to prevent perchlorate contamination of drinking water.

Lastly, DES is encouraging applicants for new community water sources to include perchlorate in the water quality testing that is completed during the new source development process. DES also encourages systems with water supplies near potential sources of perchlorate to test for the compound. The cost of a low-level perchlorate analysis is approximately $150.

For more information on perchlorate, including a list of laboratories that can complete a low-level analysis, please contact Brandon Kernen at (603) 271-0660 or bkernen@des.state.nh.us. ■

2005 DES Drinking Water Source Protection Workshop

May 12, 2005

9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

DES Auditorium, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH

For community planners, water supply officials, health officials & consultants

The DES Source Water Protection Program will hold its fourth annual Drinking Water Source Protection Workshop on May 12 at 29 Hazen Drive in Concord. Agenda items include: the risks of MtBE to New Hampshire water supplies, measuring the performance of stormwater treatment systems, tracking the source of water pollution using DNA, and changes to DES's Site Specific Program. The complete agenda is available on the Water Supply and Engineering Bureau website at www.des.nh.gov/DWSPP/.

Seating is limited and provided on a first come–first serve basis. There is no cost for this workshop.

For more information or to reserve a space, please contact Pierce Rigrod at (603) 271-0688 or email prigrod@des.state.nh.us.

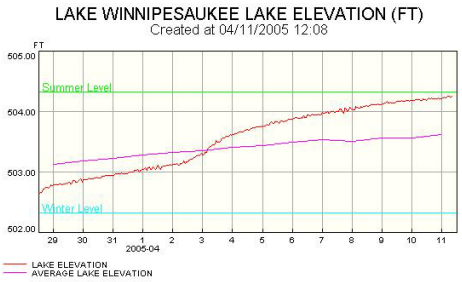
Real-time information now available for Winnipesaukee River Watershed

by Steve Doyon, DES Dam Bureau

For the last year, DES has been publishing real-time data and other information related to many of the dams it operates, as well as stream flow and other meteorological data at various locations throughout the state. Information related to water level, stream flow, precipitation and air temperature is available at many locations, as is seasonal snow pack data. Of special interest to many longtime and summer residents, business owners and recreational users are data specific to the Winnipesaukee River watershed, including the water levels of Lake Winnipesaukee, Lake Winnisquam and Silver Lake, and flows in the Winnipesaukee River at Tilton. The graphic below shows the interface for the Winnipesaukee River watershed.

By selecting the Lake Winnipesaukee link from the graph above, the user is able to get specific data related to lake elevation, precipitation and air temperature.

DES, as owner and/or operator of several dams along the Winnipesaukee River, is responsible for managing the water levels of, and flow releases from, the dams that control these impoundments. DES manages each of these waterbodies within established guidelines to meet specific objectives, including recreation, flood reduction and the efficient delivery of stored water to downstream hydropower facilities. However, because of hydraulic constraints within the Winnipesaukee River system, the objectives are sometimes difficult to achieve. Specifically, high inflow into the lakes when they are full, or nearly full, can result in flooding of lake shorefront property or properties along the river due to the limited storage capacity of the lakes and the hydraulic constraints of the dam structures and the main stem of the river.



Following serious flooding that occurred in the watershed in October 1996, the Legislature established a committee to study the management of flow in the Winnipesaukee River and the measures that could be taken to reduce periodic flood damages along the river. The committee recommended that DES develop a computer model to assist it in managing flows in the Winnipesaukee River, and also recommended that an advisory committee be established to assist DES in the development of the model. The Legislature adopted the recommendations of the committee and directed DES to develop the model – and also appropriated $257,000 to do so.

Under a contract with Riverside Technology, Inc. of Fort Collins, Colorado, a forecasting and reservoir operations model of the Winnipesaukee River was developed that improves DES's ability to manage the Winnipesaukee River Basin for recreation, flood reduction, and hydropower generation. Specifically, the system that was developed assists DES by:

- Providing real-time access to hydrometeorological data.
- Storing and managing the real-time data.
- Forecasting lake levels and stream flows in the basin using the real-time data.
- Providing real-time decision support for reservoir operations.
- Evaluating alternative reservoir operations and structural measures.
- Making information on current conditions in the basin available on the web.

Since publishing the information related to the Winnipesaukee River watershed, DES has expanded the availability of real-time data to the Pemigewasset River and Ossipee Lake basins. In addition, information related to the Mascoma, Salmon Falls, Piscataquog, Suncook and Powwow River watersheds will be added soon. Please visit the website at www.des.state.nh.us/rti_home/. ■

UST vapor release trends unsettling

by Gary Lynn, DES Waste Management Division

DES is in the process of investigating a recently discovered and unique phenomenon regarding releases of MtBE vapors from upgraded underground storage tank systems. This article describes DES efforts to identify possible solutions to this problem.

DES reviews groundwater quality data on an ongoing basis at existing gas stations in an effort to expedite cleanup activities and detect ongoing releases of gasoline in state. Our review of groundwater quality data has recently revealed a troubling trend toward the presence of high, sustained levels of MtBE contamination in the groundwater. DES believes that the MtBE trends are the result of ongoing gasoline releases because the data differ significantly from typical data for earlier, original releases. Benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylenes (BTEX) compounds are typically observed in groundwater at sites impacted by the original release(s); ongoing releases have significant concentrations of MtBE contamination in groundwater with relatively low levels of other contaminants. Small, ongoing releases of gasoline are expected to exhibit high levels of MtBE and low levels of other contaminants because the other key gasoline components are more biodegradable and less mobile than MtBE.

DES review of existing data indicates that a significant source of the MtBE contamination is the release of vapors from underground storage tank systems. DES collected pressure profiles from a variety of underground storage tank systems and documented that Stage II vapor recovery systems and gasoline deliveries result in positive pressures in tank systems. At a test site in Windham, DES installed a Vaporsaver system to lower tank system operating pressures and was able to achieve over 90 percent reduction in MtBE contamination of groundwater in wells near the underground tanks. DES is also working to understand and reduce vapor releases by conducting numerous underground storage tank systems inspections. These inspections document and address vapor releases from a variety of tank top fittings, such as dry breaks, fill caps, automatic tank gage covers, etc.

DES corroborated the observation of vapor leaks with an analysis of MtBE groundwater contamination trends following the completion of pressure decay test-initiated vapor leak repairs. Based on the review of the groundwater quality trends following the pressure decay testing/repairs, DES observed: 1) there was downward MtBE contamination trend following 79 pressure decay tests (41 percent); 2) there was an upward MtBE contamination trend following 44 pressure decay tests/vapor leak repairs (23 percent); 3) there was an upward spike in MtBE concentrations following 24 pressure decay tests (13 percent); and 4) there was no trend–or concentrations were too low to evaluate a trend–after 45 tests (23 percent). Since upward trends can result from the repair of atmospheric leaks or because of leaks during pressure decay testing, the data indicates that vapor leaks could be a key factor in ongoing releases at approximately 77 percent of the Stage II vapor recovery gas station sites.

DES consulted with colleagues in other states to determine whether they had identified similar problems. Vermont DEC has an active leak investigation and repair program and has reported similar concerns. California has completed several key studies that have also documented vapor releases. These studies demonstrate the potential significance of vapor releases.

DES, UNH and a major gasoline distributor will undertake a pilot project this summer that will: 1) measure the size of vapor releases from a variety of tank system components; 2) evaluate inspection protocols to detect and repair leaks; and 3) evaluate a variety of leak prevention and UST system pressure mitigation approaches. The overall objective of the pilot project is the development of a set of cost effective management tools and options to minimize the release of MtBE vapors and resulting groundwater contamination from upgraded underground storage tank systems. ■

State groundwater levels slowly recharge

By taking monthly measurements from wells across the state, DES monitors the change in water levels and the amount of recharge to the state's groundwater. Traditionally, groundwater levels are recharged the most in the spring as the earth thaws and snowpacks melt.

From the most recent measurements taken at the end of March, we see that the statewide average water level increased 0.30 foot from February. The shallow, 21-foot monitoring well in Newport showed the greatest change with an increase of 2.15 feet. Lee had the largest decrease with a 0.52 foot decrease from February. The statewide average water levels are up 0.50 feet when compared to March 2004. However, this does not include the data for the Ossipee well, as no data was collected on this well in March 2004. For more information on monitoring state groundwater levels, please contact Gen Al-Egaily, NH Geological Survey, at (603) 271-1973 or e-mail galegaily@-des.state.nh.us. ■

16th Annual NPS Pollution Conference to be held at Mount Washington Hotel May 24-26

With the theme "Our Watersheds: Working Together to Achieve Results," the 16th Annual Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS) Conference will be held on May 24 to 26 at the beautiful Mount Washington Hotel in Bretton Woods. Hosted by DES and the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), this conference will provide participants the opportunity to learn how to put together and manage successful and fundable watershed projects with outcomes and measurable results. Sessions will also include case studies of the latest low impact development projects in the Northeast. The conference will be beneficial to watershed organizations; state, federal, and municipal governments; consulting firms; and academia.

Conference attendees can also participate in a field trip to the top of Mount Washington with a guided tour of the Weather Observatory and presentations from regional experts on atmospheric deposition impacts to local watersheds.

For an agenda and on-line registration, visit www.neiwpcc.org/npsannualmeeting.htm. A competitive grant may be available to cover some registration fees. ■

Celebrate Clean Air Week May 23-29, 2005

DES joins states throughout the Northeast in celebrating Clean Air Week to raise awareness about the causes and effects of air pollution, and to inform people about what they can do to protect their health and keep the air clean. Special activities planned for this week include:

- Hikes and visits to the air monitoring station located at the summit of Pack Monadnock, Miller State Park. A new interpretive message board has been placed at the site – a cooperative project of DES, DRED and UNH.
- Official dedication on May 26 of the new air monitoring station at the Lebanon Airport.
- Announcements of the "Ride Free - Breathe Free" program for 2005 – N.H. Public Transit providers will again offer free bus rides on days when "Air Quality Action Days" are issued by DES.

For more information on Clean Air Week, contact Kathy Brockett at (603) 271-6284 or kbrockett@des.state.nh.us. For information on current air quality conditions in New Hampshire and daily forecasts, visit www.airquality.nh.gov. ■

New signage at 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, proudly acknowledges the two state agencies herein: the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Environmental Services.

With the recent opening of the renovated laboratory wing, lab samples being dropped off for DES analyses may once again be brought to this main entrance.

Frequency of seismic activity in state intriguing

The NH Geological Survey recently reviewed the number and frequency of earthquakes in New Hampshire over the past two decades. The results were intriguing. For example, there were 88 earthquakes within 100 miles of Portsmouth in the last 10 years; 202 earthquakes within 100 miles in the last 20 years. The highest concentration of earthquake epicenters is along the Central New Hampshire Seismic Zone, which is an area that encompasses a segment of the Merrimack Valley and extends into the Lakes Region. NHGS will consider developing a publication and map with these data for planners, consultants, and the general public. DES submitted a Capital Budget request to enhance the monitoring coverage of the state's bedrock aquifer, which under the current network is only being monitored by one well. ■

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Services

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